

**MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 6, 2026  
MEETING OF THE MORTON GROVE APPEARANCE COMMISSION  
MORTON GROVE VILLAGE HALL, 6101 CAPULINA AVENUE, MORTON GROVE, IL 60053**

Pursuant to proper notice in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the regular meeting of the Appearance Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Pietron. Brandon Nolin called the roll.

Commissioners Present: Block, Dahlberg, Manno, Minx, and Zimmer

Commissioners Absent: Pietron with notice; Hedrick resigned

Village Staff Present: Brandon Nolin, AICP, Community and Economic Development Administrator

Trustees Present: Minx, Thill, and White

During roll call, Brandon Nolin noted that Commissioner Donna Hedrick had submitted notice of her resignation from the commission and her seat was now vacant.

Acting Chairperson Minx proceeded to seek approval of the December 2, 2025 minutes.

Commissioner Dahlberg moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Zimmer seconded the motion. Acting Chairperson Minx called for the vote.

Commissioner Block voting	aye
Commissioner Dahlberg voting	aye
Commissioner Manno voting	aye
Commissioner Zimmer voting	aye
Chairperson Pro Tem/Commissioner Minx voting	aye

Minutes approved (5-0)

Acting Chairperson Minx called for the first case.

**CASE:** AC 25-19

**APPLICANT:** Graham Enterprise, Inc.

**LOCATION:** 8801 Waukegan Road  
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

**PETITION:** Request for approval of an Appearance Certificate for new illuminated canopy signage at an existing automobile mini mart and service station in the C-1 General Commercial District.

Brandon Nolin noted that the applicant requested to withdraw the case from the agenda citing uncertainty regarding the timeline for the installation of the requested signage. He noted that staff would not include the case on any future agendas until the applicant confirms the project is moving forward. Chairperson Pro Tem/Commissioner Minx acknowledged the request and called for the next case.

**CASE:** AC 26-01

**APPLICANT:** North Shore Sign

**LOCATION:** 5601 Dempster Street  
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

**PETITION:** Request for approval of an Appearance Certificate for installation of a pylon sign that is nonconforming due to size, location and lack of a landscape bed in the C-1 General commercial District.

Mr. Nolin introduced the case. In the case of AC 26-01, the applicant is requesting approval of an Appearance Certificate for installation of a pylon sign that is nonconforming due to size, location, and lack of landscape bed. The proposed sign requires waivers as the sign face exceeds the fifty (50) square feet maximum allowed; it will be located adjacent public right of way where a minimum setback of twelve ft. six in. (12' 6") is required; and a landscape bed is not provided at the base. The previous monument sign at the subject property has been removed, and was approximately 8 ft. tall and located in a location on the north edge of the same landscape area. While there may be precedent for the size and location waivers, the applicant has been asked to speak to the lack of proposed landscaping including replacement of landscaping lost with the new sign location. Under Case AC 24-03, the owner of nearby gas station at 6000 Oakton was required to modify curbs to establish the required landscape bed surrounding a new pricing sign and staff supports the use of a similar condition for Case AC 26-01.

Mr. Nolin made reference to a landscape plan drawing and letter provided by the applicant immediately prior to the meeting and handed hard copies to the commission.

Jeff Barmueller, representing North Shore Sign, indicated that the gas station at the subject property is requesting to install a new pylon sign similar in sign area to the Shell gas station north across Dempster Street and that setback from road is at least half the height of the sign. He also noted that the letter submitted to the commission included a commitment for lighting and sign illumination to not exceed 5,000K [degrees Kelvin].

Commissioner Zimmer indicated a preference for a lower monument sign, similar to the previous sign.

Mr. Barmueller responded that previous sign was hit by a vehicle and the applicant is seeking a taller sign that will not be obscured by vehicles.

Commissioner Zimmer noted that the new sign would be visible from the Edens [Expressway] and the applicant confirmed that was also a benefit of the requested sign height which is still within the maximum height permitted.

Commissioner Dahlberg asked about the ability to include additional landscaping, including a larger landscape bed surrounding the sign base, as noted in the staff report.

Mr. Barmueller Applicant indicated that reworking the curb in that location was possible as it would not interfere with needed fuel truck movements, but asked whether centering the sign in the existing island would be acceptable to avoid increased cost. He also clarified that landscaping would be provided in the area where the previous sign was and sign base would be removed. Mr. Barmueller asked, if curb work were to be required, could the sign be installed first since it was removed due to accident.

Commissioner Dahlberg asked staff to clarify and Mr. Nolin indicated the project would be treated as a single permit. He noted that the sign could be installed first, but the permit would not be closed until any required curb work and landscaping was completed.

Commissioner Dahlberg moved to approve case AC 26-01, a request for the installation of a monument sign that is nonconforming due to sign face size, location, and lack of planting bed at 5601 Dempster Street in Morton Grove, Illinois, subject to the following condition:

1. Prior to filing any Sign Permit Application, the owner/applicant shall submit a revised landscape plan that includes the location of a modified parking lot curb to accommodate the proposed island, removal of the old existing monument sign base, and required landscape bed. The final landscape plan must be deemed consistent with the approved plans and Appearance Commission discussion, as determined by the Community Development Administrator and Appearance Commission Chairperson. If such designs are deemed to be inconsistent with the approved plans or if materials are deemed to be of a lower quality than the approved materials, then the owner/applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.
2. Prior to filing any Sign Permit Application, the owner/applicant shall provide the Village with final details regarding the requested monument sign location and dimensions on the subject property, that must be deemed consistent with the approved signs, as determined by the Community Development Administrator and Appearance Commission Chairperson. Illuminated signage and other illuminating features on the property may not exceed 5,000K (degrees Kelvin). If such designs are deemed to be inconsistent with the approved plans, then the owner/applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Manno.

Commissioner Block voting	aye
Commissioner Dahlberg voting	aye
Commissioner Manno voting	aye
Commissioner Zimmer voting	no
Chairperson Pro Tem/Commissioner Minx voting	aye

Motion passed 4-1.

**CASE:** AC 26-02

**APPLICANT:** Jas d. Ahern Signs

**LOCATION:** 9544 Waukegan Road  
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

**PETITION:** Request for approval of an Appearance Certificate for signage plan for the rebranding of an existing mini mart in the C-1 General Commercial District.

Brandon Nolin introduced the case. In the case of AC 26-02, the applicant is requesting approval of an Appearance Certificate for a signage plan for the rebranding of an existing automobile mini mart and service station at 9544 Waukegan Road. The existing station is being rebranded from goodstop by Casey's to Mobil and as part of the rebranding, the existing nonconforming pylon sign, gas canopy, and gas pumps are being updated with new signage

and architectural accents. A waiver of 3 ft. is needed for the pylon sign which is being refaced, but is located too close to the Waukegan Road right of way. A very similar package of signs and finishes was approved by the Appearance Commission under case AC 24-03 at the Mobil gas station at 6000 Oakton Street and at 6335 Dempster under case AC 24-07. He noted that staff have no concerns regarding the application.

Charlie Sheehan, representing Jas d. Ahern Signs, indicated that the applicant is seeking approval for a new “Mobil” rebranding sign package and had no further comments.

Commissioner Dahlberg asked whether light temperature would be maintained at less than 5000 degrees Kelvin.

Mr. Sheehan affirmed that any lighting or signs would not exceed 5000K and he could submit a signed letter to that effect is requested.

Commissioner Zimmer moved to approve case AC 26-02, a request for approval of an Appearance Certificate for signage plan for the rebranding on an existing minimart at 9544 Waukegan Road in Morton Grove, Illinois, subject to the following condition:

1. Prior to filing any Sign Permit Application, the owner/applicant shall provide the Village with final details regarding all sign locations and dimensions on the subject property, including existing signs on the primary structure that are to remain, that must be deemed consistent with the approved signs, as determined by the Community Development Administrator and Appearance Commission Chairperson. Illuminated signage and other illuminating features on the property may not exceed 5,000K (degrees Kelvin). If such designs are deemed to be inconsistent with the approved plans, then the owner/applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dahlberg.

Commissioner Block voting	aye
Commissioner Dahlberg voting	aye
Commissioner Manno voting	aye
Commissioner Zimmer voting	aye
Chairperson Pro Tem/Commissioner Minx voting	aye

Motion passed 5 -0.

**CASE:** AC 26-03

**APPLICANT:** Proyekt Studio, LLC on behalf of St. Mary’s Petroleum Inc.

**LOCATION:** 6000 Oakton Street  
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

**PETITION:** Request for approval of an Appearance Certificate for site, landscape, and building plans associated with Case PC 26-01, a request to amend a Special use Permit (Ord. 10-26) to allow the elimination of the automotive maintenance and repair use and expansion of the retail sales area within an automobile minimart station.

Brandon Nolin introduced the case. In the case of AC 26-03, the applicant is requesting approval of an Appearance Certificate for site, landscape, and building plans associated with Case PC 26-01, to renovate the existing automobile

minimart and service station at 6000 Oakton Street to eliminate the automotive maintenance and repair use and expand the retail sales area. As part of the renovation, the service bays would be eliminated and replaced by a new façade with interior remodeling to add a walk-in cooler, a work room, two restrooms, and expanded sales area.

The applicant is proposing use of a mix of light brown brick veneer and coursed ashler stone, with a gray stone parapet and stone still. Staff have concerns with the proposed use of opaque glazing across all windows, and light levels (both in terms of spillover, and in terms of insufficient site lighting in some locations). Following submission of the staff report, additional thought has also been given to the lack of landscaping in the application. While the application focuses on the façade improvements and site improvements are not included, Staff have concerns regarding a lack of proposed landscaping as the site is deficient regarding perimeter landscaping and there appears to be sufficient space to accommodate additional landscape beds. Mr. Nolin acknowledged that comments regarding landscaping were only provided to the applicant the day prior, so a formal response prior to the meeting was not possible.

Gregory P Ziomek, representing Proyeckt Studio, indicated the staff summary was accurate and he was available to answer any questions.

Commissioner Manno asked the applicant to speak to lighting concerns including low light levels and spillover onto Austin Avenue.

Mr. Ziomek noted that they are proposing a wall pack [light] on the north wall of the building, and would be willing to add a wall pack on the west wall to provide similar lighting to address low light levels in that area. He also noted that he had a request into lighting consultant to confirm that shields or baffles could be used to limit light across the property line caused by the canopy lighting, but had not heard back. Mr. Ziomek also confirmed that lighting would not exceed the 5000K [degrees Kelvin] limit requested in the staff report.

Commissioner Dahlberg asked about the use of opaque glazing on all windows.

Mr. Ziomek clarified that the south facade would use 100% clear glass and that opaque glazing was only requested for the windows on the east wall. He noted the applicant's concern with changing all glass to clear as the east wall would conceal shelving and behind-counter items that are higher value. Mr. Ziomek also noted that the applicant had originally planned for brick, but added opaque glass to improve the aesthetic of the east call.

Commissioner Dahlberg asked if staff had any concerns based on the applicant's response. Mr. Nolin clarified that staff interpreted a single window note as applying to all windows, and had no concerns if the 100% opaque glazing was isolated to east window as indicated. Commissioner Dahlberg agreed that the glazing was not an issue.

Commissioner Block asked about timeline for construction.

Mr. Ziomek replied that construction times have tripled in the last couple of years and that is an unknown, but ideally as soon as possible. He then noted that without knowing of supply chain and construction scheduling issues, they believed they could start the project within a couple of months.

Commissioner Manno asked the applicant to speak to the potential to provide additional landscaping on the site.

Mr. Ziomek indicated that the applicant was willing to work with staff to identify opportunities for landscaping, but the ability to add landscaping would be impacted by space needed for semi-truck maneuvering. Specifically, he noted that the gap between the north gas pump island and southernmost space on Austin Avenue is only 26 ft. as currently proposed.

Commissioner Block moved to approve case AC 26-03, the request for an Appearance Certificate for site, landscape, and building plans, for the modification of an existing automobile minimart station under Special Use Permit amendment (PC 26-01) for the property commonly known as 6000 Oakton Street in Morton Grove, Illinois, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to filing any Building Permit Application, the owner/applicant shall provide revised elevation drawings, subject to review and approval by the Community Development Administrator and Appearance Commission Chairperson, that indicate 100% transparent glazing on all windows, except for those located on the east façade and the primary entrance. A note shall also be provided on the revised elevation drawings indicating that no shelving or stock shall be placed in front of any windows on the south façade to maintain transparency. If such designs are deemed to be inconsistent with the approved plans, then the owner/applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.
2. Prior to filing any Building Permit Application, the owner/applicant shall provide revised lighting plan and photometric analysis, subject to review and approval by the Community Development Administrator and Appearance Commission Chairperson, that provides adequate site lighting and limits spillover on all property lines including the, but not limited to the Oakton Street right-of-way. If such designs are deemed to be inconsistent with the approved plans, then the owner/applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.
3. Prior to filing any Sign Permit Application, the owner/applicant shall provide the Village with final details regarding all sign locations and dimensions on the subject property, to ensure compliance with the Appearance Certificate granted under case AC 24-03, as determined by the Community Development Administrator. Illuminated signage and other illuminating features on the property may not exceed 5,000K (degrees Kelvin). If such designs are deemed to be inconsistent with the approved plans, then the owner/applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.
4. Prior to filing any Building Permit Application, the owner/applicant shall provide revised site plans and landscaping plans that increase landscaping provided along the Austin Avenue frontage and western property line, subject to review and approval by the Community Development Administrator and Appearance Commission Chairperson. If such designs are deemed to be inconsistent with the approved plans, then the owner/applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Manno.

Commissioner Block voting	aye
Commissioner Dahlberg voting	aye
Commissioner Manno voting	aye
Commissioner Zimmer voting	aye
Chairperson Pro Tem/Commissioner Minx voting	aye

Motion passed 5-0.

Hearing no further business,

Commissioner Block moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dahlberg. The motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously pursuant to a voice vote at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes by: Brandon Nolin, AICP